



# CITY OF LAKE FOREST

## Saddleback Ranch Road Traffic Calming Project

Sept. 17, 2015

Recent construction activities associated with the Saddleback Ranch Road Traffic Calming Project have generated some questions throughout the community. In response, staff has prepared the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

### **Saddleback Ranch Road Traffic Calming Project** **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: Did the residents of Portola Hills participate in the decision making process to install traffic calming on Saddleback Ranch Road?**

A: Yes. Beginning in 2012, the City engaged with the community to gather feedback associated with the Portola Center development project and traffic impacts in particular. The community voiced concerns about traffic safety and traffic speeds in particular along Saddleback Ranch Road. In addition to requesting feedback via Ask Lake Forest, emails, phone calls, and written correspondence, the City hired an independent traffic engineer to facilitate community outreach through a series of community workshops held in October, November, and December of 2012. The feedback from the community shaped the traffic calming measures being implemented today on Saddleback Ranch Road.

From these discussions came a neighborhood consensus to implement traffic calming measures on Saddleback Road from Millwood Road to Ridgeline Road.

**Q: What is the timeline of events for this project?**

June 14, 2012	Portola Center - Initial Study Letter Sent to Residents within 1,000 feet

June 15, 2012	Portola Center - Initial Study released for Public Review
July 10, 2012	Portola Center - Notice of Preparation Public Scoping Meeting
July 12, 2012	Portola Center - Planning Commission Workshop
September 12, 2012	Initial Portola Hills Traffic Workshop
September 27, 2012	Portola Center - Planning Commission Workshop
October 16, 2012	City Council Meeting - Stantec Contract Amendment - Portola Center Traffic Consulting Services
November 15, 2012	Second Portola Hills Traffic Workshop
December 12, 2012	Third Portola Hills Traffic Workshop
January 10, 2013	Portola Center - Planning Commission Workshop
May 23, 2013	Portola Center - Planning Commission Workshop
August 6, 2013	City Council Meeting - Saddleback Ranch Road Preliminary Design
March 26, 2014	E-mail of Saddleback Ranch Road Preliminary Design (361 sent)
April 15, 2014	City Council Meeting - Saddleback Ranch Road Final Design
May 6, 2014	Portola Hills 1 HOA Meeting (attended by City staff)
June 26, 2014	Meeting w/ Portola Hills Elementary School principal & maintenance staff (attended by City staff)
July 9, 2014	Portola Hills 2 HOA Meeting (attended by City staff)
November 4, 2014	Portola Hills 1 HOA Meeting (attended by City staff)
November 12, 2014	Portola Hills 2 HOA Meeting (attended by City staff)
January 12, 2015	Bella Palermo HOA Meeting (attended by City staff)

April 3, 2015	Project Advertised for Construction
May 19, 2015	City Council Meeting - Construction Contract Award for Saddleback Ranch Road Improvements
June 26, 2015	Notice to Proceed for Saddleback Ranch Road Improvements

**Q: Who came up with the design and what studies were done for this project?**

A: The City hired a professional traffic engineering consulting firm, Stantec, to collect and analyze data and design the traffic calming features. The consultant completed extensive traffic counts and field measurements, conducted field observations, met with school officials, and held public meetings to fully document the existing traffic patterns and conditions in the area. Based on the analyses, Stantec developed a final design.

**Q: What is the goal of traffic calming?**

A: The traffic calming measures being implemented on Saddleback Ranch Road are designed to work together to: (1) cause subtle changes in the path of travel for through traffic, and (2) to narrow the travel lanes. These restrictive lanes are designed to slow traffic down, because drivers tend to drive slower in narrower, non-linear lanes. The restrictive lanes will also require drivers and bicyclists to share the road in accordance with State law in many areas, which can also act as a constraint on speed.

**Q: What types of traffic calming measures are being constructed?**

A: The traffic calming measures being used on this project include raised and painted medians, bulb-outs at intersections, diverter medians to guide drivers making right turns and other striping and signing changes.

**Q: Are the improvements limited to concrete and asphalt?**

A: The project includes more than just concrete and asphalt. There will be landscaping installed in medians and near the bulb-outs to help provide a more aesthetic environment, while still retaining the benefits of the traffic calming measures.

**Q: When is the construction expected to be completed?**

A: The construction work began in July 2015 and is expected to continue through December 2015.

**Q: Saddleback Ranch Road is used by bicyclists in the area. How will this project affect bicyclists?**

A: Saddleback Ranch Road is considered a bike route because it is used by road cyclists and mountain bikers in the area. Although there were never striped bike lanes on Saddleback, there were wider segments of the roadway that allowed for bikes and vehicles to travel side-by-side. With the addition of the traffic calming measures, there are now certain segments of the roadway where bikes and vehicles may have to travel in single file formation. Bikes are considered vehicles by the vehicles code and therefore have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of vehicles.

**Q: What was changed in front of Portola Hills Elementary School?**

A: A dedicated left turn lane into the school was installed along with a storage lane for vehicles exiting the school. In addition, a dedicated right turn lane was installed into the school for northbound Saddleback. The City has received several positive comments about the improvements in the traffic conditions since the changes were implemented.

**Q: Is the speed limit going to change with the new traffic calming measures?**

A: Any time there is a substantial change to a roadway, a new Engineering and Traffic study (commonly known as a speed

study) is conducted to see if the speed limit should be changed. Since the speed limit is set based on how actual drivers use the street, the City cannot conduct a new survey to determine if the speed limit should be changed until the roadway is fully open and traffic has adjusted to the conditions (usually in about 30-60 days).

**Q: Has the project reduced the number of through lanes on Saddleback Ranch Road?**

A: No. Saddleback Ranch Road from Millwood to Ridgeline basically had one through lane in each direction along with some right turn lanes and merging lanes before the current project. Once the project is complete there will still be one through lane in each direction, but there will be fewer and/or shorter right turn and merging lanes.

**Q: Where can I get more information or provide feedback to the City?**

A: You can contact the City through our website at [www.lakeforestca.gov](http://www.lakeforestca.gov) and use our Ask Lake Forest (ALF) system to submit comments and questions. You can also contact the Public Works Department by telephone at (949) 461-3400 or email the City's Traffic Engineer, Dave Rogers at [drogers@lakeforestca.gov](mailto:drogers@lakeforestca.gov) or the project manager, Doug Erdman at [derdman@lakeforestca.gov](mailto:derdman@lakeforestca.gov).

**Q: What happens in the event of an evacuation?**

A: If area residents were asked to evacuate, the Orange County Sheriff's department would guide the evacuation in accordance with their existing protocols, which could include utilizing both sides of the roadways in the case of an emergency.

